

# Safety-Gram

## Installation Safety Office

January 8, 2009

# WINTER DRIVING TIPS

**KNOW YOUR VEHICLE** - Not all cars respond the same to icy, slippery roads. For that reason, knowing how to handle your vehicle and how it responds in various weather conditions is important. AAA recommends that motorists practice slow-speed maneuvers on an empty snow or ice covered parking lot. You should also page through your owner's manual, familiarizing yourself with your vehicle's braking system and tire traction.

**Front Wheel Drive** vehicles handle better than rear wheel drive on slippery roads because the weight of the engine is on the drive wheels, which helps to improve your traction.

**Rear Wheel Drive** – because there is virtually no weight on the rear wheels of your car, vehicles that operate by using rear wheel drive tend to slide from side to side during turns on icy roads. Cars and light duty truck owners can place bags of sand or kitty litter in the bed of the truck to help balance the weight, and distribute it equally.



**Know Your Brakes** - Not all braking systems are the same. Find out which type of brakes your vehicle uses and then follow the safety steps below. Anti-lock braking systems (ABS) offer significant advantages on slick roads, if used correctly. Never manually pump ABS brakes yourself. Apply only steady pressure continuously until you come to a complete stop. If you don't have ABS, you should gently apply pumping pressure to your brakes during slippery conditions. Do not apply steady pressure to your brakes. Standing on your brakes will only cause wheel lock, and may result in your car spinning out of control.

**DISTANCE FACTOR** - The most important thing to remember when driving on slick roads is that you must travel, steer and brake more slowly than usual. The distance needed to stop on ice is twice as long as what you would need to brake under normal driving circumstances.

**BLACK ICE** - Black ice is defined as ice that remains on roadways that are not subjected to direct sunlight. Black ice commonly found on roads that travel around lakes and rivers, in tunnels, on overpasses and in highly shaded, rural areas. Black ice is almost invisible to the naked eye. Be especially leery when driving your car into shaded areas, and slow your vehicle down during your approach.

**HANDLING SKIDS** - The biggest problem facing most winter drivers is skidding on slick, icy or snow covered roads. Once you feel your car begin to skid, slowly remove your foot from the accelerator and **DO NOT BRAKE**. As your vehicle's tires grab the road, slowly turn the steering wheel in the direction you want your front wheels to go.

**VISIBILITY** – You can improve your visibility by clearing all snow and ice from your vehicle (hood, roof, trunk, lights, windows, mirrors and fenders). Use your low beams when driving in an ice or snow storm. You'll have better visibility.

*For additional information contact: Your Unit Additional Duty Safety Officer, or Your Unit Collateral Duty Safety Officer, or Installation Safety Office - 878-3740*